



*Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, Lincoln, Virginia
Photo courtesy of: History Matters*

Chapter 3

County Heritage Register

At a time of rapid growth and change, the County needs to acknowledge the efforts of individuals and groups that hold and maintain the integrity of properties that tie us to our past. The County Heritage Register is a tool to highlight significant resources and recognize those landowners who see the value of the heritage resources on their property. The program is also intended to encourage a higher level of stewardship by increasing community awareness of the resources and the benefits of preservation.

The direction for this program is derived from the County's Comprehensive Plan that states:

"[The] County will create a County Historic Landmarks Inventory, which will reflect those historic structures and archaeological sites that have local historic value and represent the prehistoric and historic traditions of Loudoun County." (Revised General Plan, Policy 7, p.5-35)

The County Heritage Register should not be confused with the National Register of Historic Places, which is a separate federal program, or the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register, administered by the State. The County program would differ from the federal and state programs in two primary respects. First, the County Heritage Register Program will broaden the scope of the register beyond historic standing structures and archaeological sites. The County program will include geological formations, heritage corridors and significant trees in addition to buildings, sites, battlefields, cemeteries and districts.

Second, though the criteria for nomination to the County Heritage Register would be based on recognized and accepted national and international standards for the evaluation of heritage resources and insignificant environmental resources, there will be variations to recognize local properties that may not qualify for the federal and/or state programs. Nomination will be based on the criteria developed for both the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the United States Department of Interior, and the World Heritage List, administered by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These criteria provide a uniform standard by which to evaluate significant heritage resources in the County.

Similarly, the benefits of the County Heritage Register would be specific to Loudoun County, with public acknowledgment, maintenance assistance and technical support being offered to property owners on the Register. The designation of a property or resource as a County Heritage Register site is strictly voluntary on the part of the owner and does not require the owner to provide public access to the property.

County Heritage Register Policies

1. The County will implement a County Heritage Register (CHR) to highlight important heritage resources and to encourage a higher level of community awareness and stewardship. Designation as a County Heritage Register will be strictly voluntary and the County will incorporate incentives to encourage participation.
2. The Register will include sites, buildings, structures, cultural landscapes such as battlefields and objects, including environmental resources; that are culturally important to the County.
3. To encourage appropriate restoration and preservation of Register properties, the County will pursue changes in regulations and land use policies to offer greater flexibility in the use and adaptive reuse of the property and offer technical assistance to owners.
4. County Heritage Register properties will be considered primary resources in the Conservation Design process for proposed developments on or adjacent to a designated property. As such the County will seek to preserve the Register property and its associated setting and mitigate any impacts resulting from the proposed development.

5. To be considered eligible for the County Heritage Register, a property must be at least 50 years old (with certain exceptions); and possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and/or association. A designated property may also possess natural, historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance and meet one of these criteria:
 - a. be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
 - b. be associated with the lives of significant historic figures; or
 - c. be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - d. have yielded or may be likely to yield, archeological information important in history or prehistory; or
 - e. achieved exceptional significance and/or importance within the past 50 years; or
 - f. be an established and familiar visual feature due to its singular man-made or natural characteristics or features; or
 - g. be an outstanding example of a major stage of the earth's geologic history; or
 - h. be an outstanding example of an environmental feature (i.e. diabase glades, fens, etc.); or
 - i. be recognized as a specimen or heritage tree, and/or be designated as a State or National Champion tree; or
 - j. be an outstanding example of community design and/or compatible infill development.
6. Individual properties and cultural landscapes such as battlefields and districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places and/or Virginia Historic Landmarks Register will be automatically considered eligible for inclusion in the County Heritage Register. In addition, battlefields located in Loudoun County and identified as "principal battles" of the Civil War by the Congressionally mandated Civil War Site Advisory Commission (CWSAC) will be automatically considered eligible for inclusion in the County Register.
7. Listing on the Heritage Register will be an ongoing effort and a property's status may be removed at anytime if it has undergone any major alterations that may have diminished its integrity or significance.
8. The County will extend the Tax Exemption for Revitalized Real Estate program administered by the County to designated properties for maintenance and restoration and will assist owners seeking incentives offered by Federal and State agencies.
9. The County will consider other financial incentives for properties listed in the County Heritage Register.

10. The County will establish a program whereby building contractors may become certified as recognized practitioners of preservation techniques and methods appropriate for the repair, rehabilitation and renovation of historic properties. The County will pursue an expedited permitting process for certified contractors and will maintain a list of certified contractors as a resource to property owners.

Implementation

The County Heritage Register is a tool intended to recognize the County's heritage resources at the local level and foster the preservation, stewardship and heritage education objectives of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Heritage Preservation Plan envisions the County Heritage Register being operated through a board appointed commission such as the Heritage Commission or the Historic District Review Committee (HDRC). The Heritage Commission would seek funds for and administer the program and offer technical expertise in the development of nomination criteria and resource selection. Funding for the program will be derived from both public and private resources.



*Hunting Hill, Taylors town, Virginia, circa 1737
One of the oldest standing structures in Loudoun County
Photo courtesy of: Paul Glenshaw*